

Representative Grier Hopkins



ALASKA STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sponsor Statement for HB 25

An Act relating to public school funding for social and emotional learning; and providing for an effective date

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which students acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to develop coping mechanisms, manage emotions, set and achieve goals, maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. House Bill 25 creates curriculum standards within the Department of Education and Early Development to help guide school districts and educators as they incorporate SEL into their classrooms.

Awareness of the need for these skills has grown in recent years. Increasingly, employers and medical professionals recognize SEL skills as essential. Parents who have watched their children struggle to maintain positive relationships and self-motivation during the pandemic closures know the value of developing these skills at home and at school. Early interventions of SEL show positive outcomes far into adulthood, increasing educational attainment and decreasing poverty. Today, SEL skills are acknowledged as the best indicators for a student's future success.

As a part of a balanced curriculum, SEL can help get students back to learning faster and develop coping methods to overcome obstacles, whether in the classroom or at home.

Across Alaska, SEL is already part of everyday learning - but there is little guidance to districts and educators on standards and best practices.

HB 25 gives school districts that baseline standard while allowing for local and culturally-relevant individualization. Recognizing that a statewide standard of practice is in the best interests of students, educators, and families, HB 25 will bring together experts and practitioners to develop these standards and give our students the support they need to succeed.

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